



JAMES A. NOYES, Director

# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

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IN REPLY PLEASE  
REFER TO FILE: **WR-4**

October 28, 2002

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: James A. Noyes  
Director of Public Works

### **ALAMITOS SEAWATER BARRIER PROJECT RESPONSE TO ADMINISTRATIVE CIVIL LIABILITY COMPLAINT NO. R4-2002-0048**

We operate three seawater barriers along the coast to halt seawater intrusion into the coastal groundwater basins. The barriers consist of wells that inject freshwater into the basin to create a barrier against the seawater. During maintenance of the injection wells, water is pumped out of the wells and discharged into the storm drain system. We have had a permit from the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), which regulates this discharge, since the early 1970s.

During the last six months, the RWQCB has conducted a review of our quarterly monitoring reports and identified various alleged violations of the permit. This is the first time since we started submitting reports in the 1970s that we recall the RWQCB contacting us regarding their review of the reports. After submittal of additional data to the RWQCB, about 70 percent of the originally identified violations were resolved. The remaining violations were due to a difference in interpretation of the permit's monitoring requirements. We have discussed these requirements with the RWQCB and have since modified our program to comply with their interpretation.

However, State law requires the RWQCB to assess a mandatory minimum penalty of \$24,000 for these remaining violations. An Administrative Civil Liability Complaint was issued by the RWQCB for this penalty.

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After review of the violations, County Counsel believed it would be difficult for Public Works to contest the penalty and prevail at the public hearing. A public hearing could also result in the penalties being increased above the minimum. Therefore, County Counsel recommended we pay the penalty. On October 17, 2002, we paid \$24,000 to the RWQCB in compliance with the Administrative Civil Liability Complaint.

GWH:jac  
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cc: Chief Administrative Office  
County Counsel (Peter Gutierrez)  
Executive Office